

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 508
By Patton

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Dr. Robert H. "Bob" Kirk on the occasion of his retirement from the University of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is most fitting that this General Assembly should honor those estimable educators who have devoted themselves to a lifetime of meritorious service in teaching and guiding others through the rigors of higher education; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Robert H. "Bob" Kirk is one such extraordinary and accomplished educator and administrator, having recently retired from the University of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from Haynes High School in Davidson County as Valedictorian, Captain of the football team, and leader of the science competition team, Dr. Kirk accepted an athletic scholarship to Fisk University from which he graduated with a degree in health and physical education in 1953; and

WHEREAS, after spending some time as a teacher in Murfreesboro and patriotically serving our country as a United States Army Railroad Master during the Korean War, Dr. Kirk enrolled at Indiana University in 1956 and earned four graduate degrees, the last of which being

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a Doctor of Health and Safety in 1960; he also pursued several postgraduate hours and certifications; and

WHEREAS, initially hired in 1967 as an Associate Professor of Health and Safety, Dr. Kirk was quickly promoted to a full professorship in 1969 and became the first African-American professor in the history of the University of Tennessee at Knoxville to receive tenure and a department head position; and

WHEREAS, upon assuming the roles of Chair of the Division of Health and Safety and Director of the University of Tennessee Safety Center, Dr. Kirk began improving the quality of the programs by leaps and bounds, increasing the quality and opportunities offered by the graduate-level safety programs under his jurisdiction; never compromising the welfare of his department, Dr. Kirk was often known to open his home to his students, and in 1994, he established the Robert H. Kirk Distinguished Doctoral Alumni Award to reward excellence in the field of safety; and

WHEREAS, prior to coming to Knoxville, Dr. Kirk was also a professor, department head, athletic director, and coach at Fisk University, Grambling State University, Alabama State University, Southern Illinois University, and Southern University at Baton Rouge; and

WHEREAS, widely recognized by his peers at the University of Tennessee for his talents and leadership abilities, Dr. Kirk served two terms on the Faculty Senate and the Graduate Council and was also involved with the Student Publications Committee, the Athletic Committee, the Campus Safety Committee, and scores of campus and system-wide search committees; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kirk is heavily involved in many local organizations and activities, some of the most notable of which are: member of the Board of Trustees of Emory and Henry College; Executive Secretary of the Knoxville Black Officials Coalition; member of the Webb School Board of Trustees; member of the Board of Directors of Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center, Fort Sanders Health Alliance, and Covenant Health; member of the Board of Directors of AAA of

East Tennessee; member of the Knox County Jury Commission; Co-Chair of the Knoxville/TVA Human Relations Council; one of the original members of the East Tennessee Foundation Board of Directors; charter member and Co-Chair of the Board of Directors of Town Hall East; and the first African-American Commissioner of KUB; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kirk is equally involved in positions in state organizations, some of the most distinguished of which are: Chair of the Tennessee Department of Education Driver and Traffic Safety Framework and Curriculum Revision Committee; Chair of the Tennessee National Teacher Examination Standards Panel; Director of the Tennessee Department of Education Health Curriculum Guide Revision Project; Director of the Tennessee Health Education Project; member of the Tennessee Board of Licensed Professional Counselors, Marriage and Family Therapists, and Clinical Pastoral Therapists; and a consultant and self-reliance program developer for the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kirk is also an active participant in several national professional organizations and committees, having served as President of the American School and Community Safety Association and the American Academy of Safety; in several leadership positions with the National Safety Council; on the Board of Directors for the National Commission Against Drunk Driving, a AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, and American Automobile Association National; as a reviewer/site visitor/grant reviewer for the National Cancer Institute, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, and National Centers for HIV, STD, and TB Prevention; and as the editor of the newsletter and journal for the National Health and Fitness Association and its predecessor organization; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his dedication to professional excellence, Dr. Kirk has received many honors and awards, including induction into both the University of Tennessee African American Hall of Fame and the Safety and Health Hall of Fame International; receipt of the Distinguished Service to Safety Award, which is the highest award of the National Safety

Council; five different Governor's Certificates of Appreciation from then-Governor Lamar Alexander; selection as a Scholar Award Recipient by two national professional associations; and an appointment as a visiting/eminent scholar at Norfolk State University in 1980 and at Tennessee State University in 1986; he has also authored or co-authored three books and countless articles; and

WHEREAS, an industrious and enterprising man, Dr. Kirk became an entrepreneur in 1977, operating Kirk's Market and BBQ, Kirk's Restaurant, Hilltop Garden and Nursery and working as an associate real estate agent with Saroff Realty Company; and

WHEREAS, a consummate family man, Dr. Kirk is most grateful for the love and companionship he shares with his wife, the former Aravella Davis, their children, Derek and his wife, Robin, and Tracy and her husband, Donald Hardin II, and their grandson, Donald Hardin III; and

WHEREAS, during his well-deserved retirement, Dr. Kirk plans to spend time with his family and pursue his hobby of buying, selling, and trading vinyl albums; and

WHEREAS, educators and administrators such as Dr. Kirk provide the foundation upon which the educational and professional framework of our society is built; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we should honor him for his many years of service to the State of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the most distinguished of academics, Dr. Robert H. "Bob" Kirk, for his many years of laudable service to the State of Tennessee, salute his commitment to excellence and high academic standards, and wish him a fulfilling and happy retirement.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.